

The Battle of the 30th 2nd Bull Run

From: *History of the 30th New York State Volunteers : manuscript, ca. 1895*. By John Bryson.

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Transcribed by Mark Madden.

General Pope when he found that Longstreet had arrived, and the prospect of “Bagging Jackson” gone might have fallen back on less terrible (ground) and awaited reinforcements, but he renewed the battle on the 30th, as he tells us, with no hope of success and the result was disaster and defeat.

Many of our men were wounded in the evening of the 29th, and left on the field to die, among whom was Lieutenant Dargen of Co. “A”-

“Brave Dargen fine and true as steel,

So earnest for his Country’s weal,

Has fallen by the way.

Columbia thou hast never pressed

A truer patriot to thy breast

Guard well his sacred clay”.

His body was found after an almost hopeless search by his friends, and the remains were taken home to Lansingburgh where they rest in the Catholic Cemetery overlooking the Hudson. Peace to his, as his, and may the country never forget his devotion, nor the young fail to emulate his virtues.

The morning of the 30th broke clear and beautiful as if smiling on the harvest of death. It took nearly to noon to gather up the fragments of our division. All enthusiasm was gone, and it was hopeless step that we advanced again upon the enemy’s works, the old railroad embankment, or hell-hole as it was called by Capt. John Landon: yet when the battle began no troops never fought with greater heroism, although all felt it was a useless sacrifice.

Skirmishers were thrown out, and we advanced through the fields to the right of Groveton and halted behind a stripe of woods not far from the fatal railroad cut.

An awful silence for the moment, preceded the bursting of the storm, Hatch rode up and with a kind of frantic gesture exclaimed “Col. Frisby take your men in there- pointing to the woods- The rebels are in there thicker than hell”, and as the voice of our Colonel rang out- “Attention men; forward charge!” We sprang over a fence in front of us into the woods, and up the slope in face of death we went with a cheer.

“On, on do not think of the fallen, but drink of the mad living cataract torrents of war.”

All fear is gone, and the singing of bullets is music that makes us mad for the fray. The flag with its colors bearer goes down, but the brave Patrick Akin takes it up and holds it to “the battle and the breeze”. Thirty six bullets go through its folds and the staff is shattered to pieces with a shell. The men go down, and many of the officers are wounded. Lt Col Searing has a horse shot from under him, and Col Frisby is wounded but refuses to leave the field, and at last falls lifeless to the ground pieced by another bullet.

Many deeds of valor are performed not only by the officers, but by the men. I saw some of are men load their pieces, rush forward almost to the railroad embankment, take aim and deliberately fire as if out in field practice*

- General Bradley L Johnson, commanding a brigade in Jackson’s Corps in his official report says, “About 4PM the movements of the enemy were suddenly developed in a divided manner. They stormed my position, deploying in the woods in brigade front, and then charging in a run, line after line brigade after brigade, up the hill in the thicket held by the 48th and the railroad cut occupied by the 42nd... before the railroad cut the fight was most obstinate. **I saw a Federal flag hold its position for half an hour within ten yards of a flag of one of the regiments in the cut, and go down six or eight times, and after the fight, one hundred dead men were lying about twenty yards from the cut some within two feet of us”.**

The men not only exposed to fire in our front but shells seemingly from our own guns in our rear would burst in our midst. The stock of my rifle being broken by one of these flying missiles. I stepped back and found a comrade lying on his face, but still grasping his rifle. I took hold of it to take it away, to replace my own, when a face, pale from the loss of blood looked into mine, and said. “Don’t take my gun I be ready to fall in pretty soon” I saw this was impossible and gently took it from his hand and commenced firing again.

In rear of the rebel entrenchment a confederate regiment was drawn up in line and the color- bearer kept waving the flag of treason in our face. Capt King, regardless of his own safety, snatched the musket out of my hand sprang forward and took deliberate aim at the rebel color-bearer, but I think he failed to bring him down. Poor King was hit himself in return and his last words as he fell were of his wife and children whom he loved fondly. Though small in stature, he was a giant in heorism, and deserves a shaft as imposing as yonder monolith that crowns the brow of Oak Wood Cemeterial heights*

- This refers to the monument erected in memory of General Wool. Captain King’s remains were interred not far from it, and at the time of writing the grave is unmarked. Although when he left

for the war, he requested that the Masonic Lodge to which he belonged in case of his death to erect a humble slate and engrave on it- "He died for his Country".

We were forcing Jackson back, when Longstreet again came to assistance, and open upon us a terrific enfilading fire. He said, "I know that no troops could stand such a fire longer than ten minutes." "For a moment", he says, "The mass was chaos, then order returned, and they reformed, apparently to renew the attack. Again from the crest of my little hill the fire of the 12 guns cut them down. As the cannons thundered the ranks broke, only to be reformed again with dogged determination. A third time the batteries tore the Federals to pieces, and as they fell back under this terrible fire I sprung everything to the charge".

This ended the fight as far as our division was engaged and we fell back leaving our dead and wounded in the hands of the enemy. God only knows what the wounded suffered that awful gloomy night after the battle.